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A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF COSMETICS ADVERTISING

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

As one of the major theory within cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor helps us understand how we shape our thoughts and actions and how meaning is construed. This paper analyses cosmetics advertisements employing the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and also, aims to show how conceptual metaphor helps to identify messages presented in the advertisements. The paper analyses 10 TV make up advertisements from 8 different brands, all of which have women as their target audience. Due to the fact that conceptual metaphor isn't limited to linguistic expressions and can, therefore, be realized non-verbally, the analysis of the selected advertisements is multimodal. Visual and auditory elements have been analysed in order to see how multimodality is used to convey the selling point of the product coded into a conceptual metaphor.

Key words: conceptual metaphor, advertisements, cosmetics

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1. Introduction

Advertising is a form of marketing communication that can be audio, visual or both. The main purpose is to transfer a message that will attract potential customers, that is, to promote a certain product, service or an idea in order to positively affect sales. With the rise of social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, it might seem that TV advertisements have fallen behind in the attempt to reach the viewers, though cosmetics marketing in general remains quite strong and the overall market value of the cosmetics industry continues to grow. According to Statista, half of all beauty related content on YouTube is make-up related, most of which are make-up tutorials. So, the claim made in the beginning of this paragraph refers to the selling power of numerous beauty bloggers, influencers and Youtubers slowly taking over the marketing aspect of the cosmetics industry. However, launching a product still requires a planned marketing campaign, which, as far as the major cosmetics brands are concerned, includes one or a series of TV advertisements. Besides, all the social media content, including numerous product reviews and tutorials are based on advertisements, that is, the advertised properties are mentioned and discussed.

Given the size of the global cosmetic products market, which is expected to reach a market value of USD 805, 61 billion by 2023 (Reuters.Com, 2018), it is safe to say that cosmetics advertising takes up a large portion of overall marketing space. There are various ways used to convey messages about cosmetic product, but what is common to almost all of those, no matter the form, is that advertisements usually sell ideas of identity along with the product. Our identities are shaped and defined by numerous things and we can have all sorts of outside influences shaping our self-image. Cosmetics advertising is one among those influences, but instead of being straightforward, the message is often conveyed through the use of metaphors. Also, due to the multimodal nature of, for instance, TV commercials, the metaphors are also multimodal. All this is especially interesting from the point of view of cognitive linguistics due to the way it studies meanings and the complexity of TV commercials. As an element of cognitive linguistics theories, conceptual metaphor explains how meanings are transferred, which can be well applied in studying advertisements.

The aim of this paper is, therefore, to analyse conceptual metaphors in cosmetics advertising discourse in order to see how meanings are conveyed. That is, how desired identities are presented using audio-visual elements, or, multimodality.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical background for the study. Section 3 presents the description of the methodology used in this paper. Section 4 presents the analysis of the sample of advertisements. Finally, section 5 presents the discussion of the results of this study.

2. Theoretical background and methodology

2.1. Cognitive Linguistics

The branch of linguistics this paper is based on is Cognitive Linguistics. As an approach to analysis of natural language, it has its origins in the work of George Lakoff, Ronald W. Langacker and Leonard Talmy (Geeraerts, and Cuyckens, 2007). It originally emerged in the early 1970s and is rooted in the emergence of modern cognitive science. As such, it is primarily concerned with investigating the relationship between language, the mind and socio-physical experience (Evans, 2011).

Given the fact it was somewhat opposed to the Chomsky's Generative Grammar (both theories having similar points), the main idea of its theory is viewing language as a part of general cognitive functions. This means, as Evans and Green (2006) put it, that language provides insights into cognitive function, that is, into the nature, structure and organisation of thoughts and ideas. Since language is assumed to reflect patterns of thought, to study language is to study patterns of conceptualisation. Being a process of meaning construction, the notion of conceptualisation, implies that Cognitive Linguistics studies the relations between meaning, language and the world. Croft and Cruse (2012) enumerate three major hypotheses as guiding the cognitive linguistic approach to language: language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty, grammar is conceptualization and knowledge of language emerges from language use.

2.1.1. Conceptual Metaphor

As a theory, Conceptual Metaphor has been one of the central topics within Cognitive Linguistics since its emergence. As the pioneers of the Conceptual Metaphor theory, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) explain, the basic premise of the theory is that conceptual metaphor is not simply a stylistic feature or a characteristic of language alone. Moreover, it is argued that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, meaning in thoughts and action. It is so because we think and act in terms of our conceptual system, which is fundamentally conceptual in nature.

Our concepts, which we are not fully aware of, structure what we perceive and how we relate to other people and since communication is based on the same conceptual system, language serves as a source of evidence for what that system is like. Also, since metaphors are conceived of as patterns of thought, they can be expressed in both verbal and nonverbal ways.

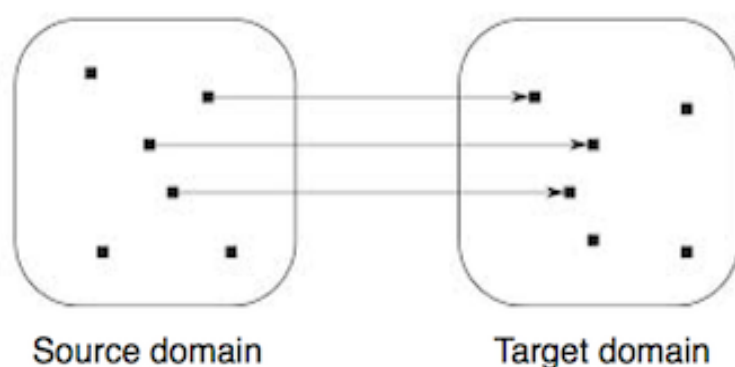


Figure 1 Conceptual metaphor model ("Applying Cross-Domain Thinking")

The essence of metaphor as a cognitive mechanism is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. Within the conceptual metaphor theory, such correspondence is referred to as *mapping*. The notion of *mapping* implies two domains and their roles. A source domain refers to the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions, whereas a target domain refers to the one we are trying to understand. Understandably, conceptual metaphors are usually construed in a way that we try to understand a more abstract domain through a more physical one, as the examples show:

IDEAS ARE FOOD

All this paper has in it are *raw* facts, *half-baked* ideas, and *warmed-over* theories.

AN ARGUMENT IS WAR

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

LOVE IS A JOURNEY

We'll just have to *go our separate ways*.

Examples: (Kövecses, 2010, 6)

Also, what is important to mention is the notion of *partial mapping*, which means that the mappings of a conceptual metaphor describe a certain target domain only partially. For instance, not all properties of FOOD are equal to the properties of IDEAS.

2.1.2. Multimodal metaphors

Since metaphors are conceptual in nature and the conceptual system directs the way we think and act, the realizations of conceptual metaphors are not limited to linguistic expressions. That is, as Kövecses (2002) explains, metaphors are realized in many other areas of human experience and are known as non-verbal metaphors.

This idea of human thinking being largely governed by metaphor drew attention to nonverbal and multimodal manifestations of metaphor. For instance, Kövecses claims: “The basic idea in this young field within metaphor studies is that neither a metaphor’s target nor its source have to be necessarily rendered verbally” (Kövecses, 2002, 71) Besides speaking and writing, other modes include pictures, music, sound, and gesture. It has to be mentioned that using modes other than speaking and writing does not necessarily mean metaphors are conveyed multimodally, for a target and a source can be conveyed in the same mode. However, in many multimodal metaphors, target or source are expressed in multiple modes at the same time. Gestures and images, both moving and static, represent two major areas of multimodal metaphor research within conceptual metaphor theory (Forceville, 2009).

Forceville (2009) lists and explains the factors that play a role in how the construal and impact of multimodal metaphors differ from their verbal counterparts. Firstly, the multimodal nature of target and source suggests that they have a perceptual immediacy that the verbal ones lack. For instance, they may be perceived as more specific. Also, they have medium-determined ways of indicating the connection between target and source. The third factor is that multimodal metaphors are more recognizable across cultures. Finally, what is the most relevant for this research, it is assumed that multimodal source domains have a stronger emotional appeal than verbal ones.

While listing the examples of occurrences of non-verbal metaphors, Kövecses (2002) explains that advertisements represent a major manifestation of conceptual metaphors. Moreover, an advertisement's selling power partly depends on the choice of the conceptual metaphor. Consequently, many advertised products tend to be presented as evoking positive emotions. To be more specific, they are often personified in a way that a relationships between consumers and products resemble various human interactions and relationships that usually evoke positive emotions, or could even be described as basic human needs (e.g. having close friends or a partner). For instance, washing powders are often advertised as friends, and cars as lovers, which usually involves whispering or hugging a vehicle or its parts (Kövecses, 2002, 65)

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

The approach employed in this analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis. It does not necessarily imply following a strict set of rules of analysis, but is rather seen as a point of view of some sort. Wodak (2013) explains that CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis)

studies not a linguistic unit per se but rather social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multimethodological approach. The objects under investigation do not have to be related to negative or exceptionally “serious” social or political experiences or events; this is a frequent misunderstanding of the aims and goals of CDA and of the term “critical”, which, of course, does not mean “negative” as in common-sense usage. Any social phenomenon lends itself to critical investigation, to be challenged and not taken for granted (Wodak 2013, 34).

It should be mentioned that the notion of discourse is seen as structured forms of knowledge about social practices, while text refers to concrete utterances or documents (Fairclough, 1995). To be more specific, CDA attempts to make the implicit explicit, and to explain the relations between discourse, power, and ideology without taking anything for granted. As Fairclough (1995) explains, the goal of CDA is to denaturalize naturalized ideologies and the process of denaturalization involves showing how certain social structures determine discourse features, but also, how discourse conversely determines social structures. What is also important to

mention regarding the nature of objects of this analysis is a critical perspective that has emerged through combination of CDA and feminist studies, known as Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). As Lazar (2007) states, FCDA is

a perspective that seeks to examine the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and power asymmetries get discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and contested in specific communities and discourse contexts. With a focus on social justice and transformation, the aim is to challenge discourses that entrench gendered social arrangements that work toward a closure of possibilities for women and men as human persons (Lazar 2007, 182).

This means that FCDA deals with power relations while focusing on gender, which is, from the feminist perspective, viewed as an ideological construct.

2.3. Advertising

Advertising is one of the most important socio-economic activities in the modern, globalized world. Vilanilam and Varghese (2004, 4) define it as “an organized method of communicating information about a product or service which a company or individual wants to sell to the people. It is a paid announcement that is conveyed through words, pictures, music and action in a medium which is used by the prospective buyers.” Also, the mentioned authors describe advertising as a form of communication whose purpose (selling) distinguishes it from all other forms of communication. The basic idea of advertising is to approach the target audience by creating a message designed to present a certain product or service and, most importantly, to persuade potential customers to buy the product or utilize the service that is being advertised (Vilanilam and Varghese, 2004) Since advertisements of all sorts can nowadays reach people through various media, and given the tremendous amount of products or services and competition among the sellers, it is critical to come up with a way to persuade the audience into buying a specific product.

As Hill (2010) puts it, persuasion involves an intrinsic emotional battle between a desire to trust the benefits the company's offer claims to provide and scepticism about being over-promised.

What is key to persuasion in advertising is establishing trust. After analysing different types of advertisements, Hill (2010) concludes that consumers usually trust argument ads over narrative or testimonial ones. Also, it is important to reach the audience on an emotional level for it gets people empathetically involved, though the emotional response is not found to be predictive of purchase intent. The elements which are found to be the most important regarding persuasion are simplicity, tangibility and presenting arguments. However, those arguments should be presented in a way that evokes emotional response because “an on-message focus alone fails to grasp the deeper reality that emotions serve as an inner source of energy, information and influence” (Hill, 2010, 169). Moreover, it is suggested that the essence of advertising is to promote positive feelings, that is, happiness and hope, the latter being the key since it involves a degree of tension and apprehension and thus provokes a more complex emotional response while silencing fears of disappointment (Hill, 2010).

Another element frequently found in advertising is the notion of caring for the potential consumers while on a mission to persuade them to buy a certain product or use an advertised service. Pennock-Speck and Fuster-Márquez (2014) suggest that it seems logical to assume TV commercials shape our buying habits to a certain degree due to the massive amounts of money spent on them and analyse one interesting and highly frequent element of TV commercials, which can be interpreted as an element of caring for the viewers. Though there is a high optionality present, TV commercials try to get people to comply and purchase certain products by using directives in narration. This is achieved through the use of imperatives and can be found in commercials for all sorts of products. However, since there is no real notion of sanctions upon non-compliance, it is suggested that the imperatives in TV commercials are carefully chosen to express advice or recommendations, that is, as directives that benefit the addressee. This can especially be found in cosmetics commercials.

2.3.1. Cosmetics advertising

The vast majority of contemporary cosmetics advertisements have women as their target audience. As a result, as Ringrow (2016) argues, there is a strong connection between femininity and an attractive appearance which can be found in language and images depicting or targeting women. Moreover, it seems that the cosmetics industry helps define femininity on the basis of that particular connection. In other words, to be feminine is to care for your appearance, preferably through consumption of certain advertised products. This implies that female appearance constantly requires improvement, but also, as media discourse presupposes, that women want those improvements and see themselves as always needing 'work' in order to maintain femininity. Though often criticised, advertisers continue to impose mostly unattainable standards regarding representation of women. One of the obsessions of the Western society is staying young-looking, which has as a result (or a cause) an immense growth of beauty business (Coupland, 2003, 127-150). Coupland's (2003) data analysis shows that "individual women, in the current sociocultural climate, are consistently persuaded of two important things: one that it is undesirable to appear to be ageing; and two that they must assume responsibility to stay young-looking, or to disguise their apparent ageing" (Coupland 2003, 137). It is therefore important to analyse cosmetics advertising discourse in order to identify the underlying ideology and, within it, the position it puts women in. The notion of position within ideology here refers to the power relations and the setting of gender norms in advertising discourse.

What is highly evident from the media, femininity and consumption are strongly linked. That is why various authors who analysed cosmetics advertising discourse identified the main construct as Commodified Femininity (Benwell and Stokoe 2006 in Ringrow 2016) or Consumer Femininity (Talbot 2010 in Ringrow 2016). Such femininity is defined through consumption of beauty products. In this way, consumption as a mean of defining femininity, becomes a part of the notion of identity. In other words, lifestyle is equated with identity. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) inferred a set of rules from cosmetics advertisements underpinning the ideology of Commodified Femininity:

1. Ageing is bad and must be striven against or disguised
2. Fat is bad
3. Activity/fitness is good, and we are always busy

4. But inactivity in the form of relaxation or 'indulgence' is equally encouraged
5. Body hair (except on head) is bad
6. Natural body odour is bad, synthetic fragrance is preferable
7. Bare face (that is, no make-up) is bad, but simultaneously a 'natural' look is prized in all arenas
8. Transformation, newness and change are good
9. Consistency of appearance is good: deodorant must last, lipstick must not smudge or fade, mascara must not run, hair colour must not fade and skin must look 'even'. This also links to the assumption that we are too busy to reapply products. (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, 174)

Benwell and Stokoe (2006) explain that this set of rules constitute beauty advertising discourse, or, narrative. Also, these naturalised narratives encode and preserve main ideological assumptions and exclude others, and are used frequently in identity construction and negotiation. What is also included in this constructed identity is the notion of empowerment, where cosmetics serve as tools of women empowerment. As Lazar suggests (in Ringrow 2016, 22), this type of empowerment implies a somewhat post-feminist interpretation of society, meaning that feminism reached all its achievements and women can do whatever they desire within the new context of equality. They can focus on beauty empowerment and act through transformative action (using a certain beauty product) or by resistive action (advertisements often urge women to, for example, 'fight the signs of aging'). As the author also stresses, the only choice not offered to women in this discourse is the one not to consume and comply with the beauty ideals.

What is important to mention here is the overall focus on women's emotional or, psychic life in recent advertising campaigns by the beauty industry. Elias, Gill and Scharff (2017) draw attention to this phenomenon and list its main critique points. Rather than just focusing on their appearance, women are invited to feel good or be comfortable in their own skin, which shows an increasing interest in women's self-esteem and confidence. This 'confidence cult', as the authors call it, is mostly critiqued for being an element of dishonest campaigning. Also, the 'love your body' discourse is seen as reinforcing the idea that female body is difficult to love and such campaigns are therefore needed. The third controversial thing regarding the mentioned narratives is the suggestion that women are to blame for their low opinion of themselves and

their bodies, meaning that their dissatisfaction is their own problem as if it originates outside of society (Elias, Gill and Scharf, 2017, 3-50). Besides that, Lazar (2017) points out that make up advertisements often portray the act of beautification as fun and play regardless of the contemporary intensification of personal grooming that "has entailed greater self-surveillance and discipline, as no part of the body may escape scrutiny and work" (Lazar 2017, 52). Lazar suggests that time, effort and skills invested in beautification get represented as easy, enjoyable girlish fun by using playful register while stressing women's entitlement to those playful pleasures.

Apart from the focus on confidence, Ringrow (2016) describes how cosmetics advertisements increasingly connect femininity to sensuality, which occurs in two main ways. Firstly, the sensory effects of products are underlined using affective language, which often, as a result, links the most unlikely products to the notion of sensuality. The other principle refers to the casting of prototypically 'sexy' young women in the advertisements, which helps to associate the product in question with female sensuality. Ringrow then explains that such connection is achieved through the use of sensual lexis for description of product qualities. Also, sensual verbs are used for stating certain product action, the formula of which usually being: **PRODUCT + VERB OF SENSUAL NATURE + BODY PART OF CONSUMER**. The connotation of these structures and verbs (e.g. product *embraces*, *caresses*, or *leaves wanting more*) is that using a certain beauty product will give one's body a sensual or pleasurable experience (Ringrow, 2016, 65). Also, a sensualised imagery is often used in cosmetics advertising. For example, a slightly open mouth (which, according to literature on body language, may be a non-verbal indication of sexual arousal) occurs in advertising of beauty or care products, such as shampoo or nail varnish, which results in little or no congruence between the product and the way it is advertised (Ringrow, 2016, 67). What is important here is that the target audience may perceive these advertisements as aspirational or inspirational in the sense that they "may aim to attain their standards of beauty and the promise of sexuality and/ or sensuality that goes with it" (Ringrow 2016, 74). Sensuality and/or sexuality is therefore seen as women's personal pursuit. Elias, Gill and Scharff (2017) draw attention to this notion and explain how cosmetics advertisements made a shift from the portrayal of women as sex objects to desiring sexual subjects, the underlying idea of which is gaining control through the commodification of one's appearance. In this way, sexual objectification can be presented as chosen by confident, assertive and active female subjects (Elias, Gill and Scharff, 2017, 3-50).

Another element frequently found in cosmetics advertising is the Problem-Solution pattern in which a product is advertised as a solution to a problem potential consumers supposedly have. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) describe this pattern as a continual construction of problems to which certain objects are offered as, usually temporary, solutions. The pattern features a string of propositions in a particular order linked by conjunctions or relations of contrast, justification or causality, whereas the pattern consists of minimally two propositions, meaning, a problem in conjunction with a solution, e.g. a hydrating serum (solution) for dry skin (problem). A Situation-Problem-Solution pattern is also frequent. Here, a situation is first presented and a problematic connotation is attached, e.g. a hydrating serum (solution) for dry skin (problem) during winter months (situation). Also, as Hoey (2001) suggests:

The (Problem-Solution) pattern is characteristically lexically signalled, either by means of inscribed signals (e.g. solution) or inscribed evaluations functioning as signals (e.g. unfortunately) or by means of evoking signals (e.g. had no money). One or more of these signals serves as a trigger for the pattern, in that it makes the pattern visible to the reader (Hoey, 2001, 140).

Ringrow (2016) proposes a model of the Problem-Solution pattern in cosmetics advertising discourse. In the model, three main types of Problems are suggested. Problem 1: Fragmented Aspect of Appearance refers to the fragmentation of body parts and their possible negative aspects, such as dry hair or skin, fine lines and the like, where each element is considered a separate problem for treatment. Problem 2: Existing Products features characteristics of other similar products in terms of their effectiveness or results. Usually, other products are mentioned as having or lacking a certain ingredient (both with negative connotations) or some other flaws regarding product qualities are singled out. What is also quite frequent, innovations regarding certain product traits may be presented in a way that they are contrasted with the existing products in subtle attempt to present the lack of the new trait as a problem. Finally, Problem 3: Lifestyle or Environment could be summarised as modern life. The elements of modern life often mentioned in cosmetics advertisements include stress, work, environment, motherhood and so on. Those elements are presented as having detrimental effects on one's appearance, and it is assumed that, for example, skin or hair needs protection against the listed factors. Also, another assumption is that various skincare products can serve this function. As the author stresses, "the consumer may have been totally or partially unaware of the problem before

viewing the advertised material” (Ringrow, 2016, 39). The Response in the model includes Positive Evaluation, Positive Result or the two combined. Also, all Response elements can include Fragmentation discourse (fragmentation of body parts when describing results), Transformation discourse (e.g. using verbs that signify transformation and improvement) and Surface Appearance discourse (often realized through the verb *look* or *appear*). To sum up, “the world of advertising presents an ever-shifting dialectic between pleasurable dreams and social nightmares, to which, of course, products present solutions” (Corrigan 1997 in Benwall and Stokoe 2006, 172).

The arguments used in beauty and care products advertisements are usually some pieces of information about the characteristics of a certain product. The information given is mostly about one or a few ingredients which are singled out and described as scientific facts. Sutton (2012) gives a great example of a successful ad campaign from the start of the twentieth century. The product in question is soap, and since there already were many different soap bars on the market, the creators of this particular ad campaign went along with the changes in society, that is, with the rise of science. Their approach was a combination of romantic sex appeal and scientific facts. The approach they came up with positioned women as consumers in such a way that they would think of themselves as modern women who used facts and the latest advances in science. This style of advertising was reinforced by a strong emotional appeal to women's desire to be beautiful and have attractive skin. What is important to mention is that this approach to advertising beauty and care products is still used today. To put it simply, science and sex sell, and there are many examples of such ad campaigns in magazines, on television or online.

Another element of cosmetics advertising is the notion of evidence of a certain product's effects often being presented in a discursive pattern similar to an empirical report. Tungate (2011) explains that beauty companies collaborate with laboratories in search of important active ingredients to add to their products or base an entire line of products on. This stage of production surely has a competitive tone to it as companies strive to be innovative and produce authenticity. After certain discoveries, concepts are being discussed in a way that they agree with the research. Prior to launching a product, samples are being tested out by volunteers, which is followed by production and packaging. Finally, this is where the advertising agencies take over. While trying to find the most attractive way of translating science into a scenario that sells the benefits of a product to the consumer, companies are free to interpret the scientific results, meaning, they tell the story to their advantage. Today, almost every major beauty brand at one

point turns to science in their advertising campaigns. Various "scientific" claims, lexis or imagery can be found in many different cosmetic products' advertisements.

As Ringrow (2016) points out, scientific-sounding lexis is related to the Problem-Solution discourse. The author uses the term *scientised* to refer to the register associated with science, and explains that such discourse “helps to reinforce the idea that skincare is a serious business, and highly technologized products can have measurable effects on physical appearance” (Ringrow 2016, 85). Categories of such discourse include scientised ingredients, scientised product names (especially frequent in higher-end skincare brands), measures of verifiability (use of various figures and statistics in advertising claims) and product specification (usually regarding features, design and packaging) (Ringrow, 2016, 81-93). In addition to this, there is a growing trend of advertising beauty and skincare products as natural or "green", which usually involves claims composed of a name of an *ingredient* + *free*, or *no* + *ingredient*. The ingredients in question are usually some artificial ingredients for which there is scientific evidence or even rumours of detrimental effects, such as paraben, ammonia, silicone, sulphate and so on (Ringrow, 2016, 96-101).

Another quite frequent element in cosmetics marketing and advertising campaigns is celebrity endorsement. It is a popular advertising strategy worldwide and, since the majority of cosmetics advertising targets women as consumers, the majority of celebrity endorsers of cosmetic brands and products are women. Those are usually famous singers, actresses or supermodels. The assumption here is that they are perceived to be more credible compared to non-celebrities and are more likely to capture consumer's attention. Although advertising campaigns often present a product endorsement as a revelation of some sort, meaning that, in an advertisement, a certain endorser shares the secrets of his/her look or a particular body part, celebrities are there to symbolize some kind of fantasy. However, Mintel's Face Colour Cosmetics UK 2015 reports that:

Only 7% of women are interested in seeing a celebrity as a make-up brand ambassador, with 28% wanting to see someone who is known for being a strong female role model and 19% wanting to see someone who is popular /relevant in today's culture. This has given rise to the use of bloggers as beauty influencers and collaborators, with 2017 turning into the year of social media influencer marketing (Mintel).

Moreover, Tungate's (2011) interview with a product manager from a major beauty company confirms similar claims and explains that consumers are well aware of the element of fantasy and of the fact that celebrities have little or no involvement with the conception of the products. However, as she adds, celebrity endorsement is important internally. Without celebrities, the industry might think you lack confidence regarding your product and the invested money sends a certain message. Also, it boosts corporate morale. On top of this, a good combination of a big star and an intriguing science story attracts attention of the press.

3. Selecting advertisements for analysis

In order to ascertain how multimodal metaphors bring about meaning in cosmetics advertising, I decided to focus on make-up advertisements. Therefore, I selected 8 famous make-up companies: Bourjois, CoverGirl, L'Oreal, Maybelline, Max Factor, Revlon and Rimmel. Then, I checked YouTube for their advertisements, by searching for the following keywords: make up TV ad, commercial. In this way, I obtained many different advertisements, and I narrowed them down to 10 by filtering out advertisements older than 2010. The selected advertisements are Bourjois Healthy Mix Foundation, CoverGirl Stay Luminous, L'Oreal Skin Perfection, L'Oreal True Match, Maybelline No Maybes, Maybelline Total Temptation, Max Factor All Day Flawless 3 in 1, Revlon PhotoReady Insta-Filter, Revlon Super Lustrous Lipstick and Rimmel Stay Matte Liquid Lipstick. My analysis was qualitative. I watched each advertisement multiple times and wrote short synopses of each advertisement, including significant visual and other clues. Then I identified the main themes, grouped the advertisements and briefly explained the themes in order to give an overview of the selected advertisements. After that, I analysed each advertisement against the theoretical framework described in Section 2.

4. Advertisements analysis

4.1. Bourjois Healthy Mix Foundation

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcXrEMzH_Fs)

In this short advertisement we see a young, energetic woman. At first, there are alternating shots of the model playing with glass or crystal fruit and shots where she is applying the product to her skin, or even playing with the packaging. The model changes facial expressions dramatically, but always into those of happiness or pleasant surprise. After the model has applied the product, we get a shot of her standing next to floating text saying “RADIANT”, then under a neon sign that says “VITAMINS”, and finally with a sleep mask with the word “FRESH” etched into it. The next shot returns to the motif of fruit, now being carried by the model in a transparent bag up some stairs with a neon Eiffel Tower in the background. A close-up of the fruit reveals it is packed into the bag along with some plastic letters and numbers representing vitamins contained in the product, and the product itself. Finally, there is a close-up shot of the glass fruit next to the product. The advertisement opens and closes with the brand logo. The accompanying song is cheery and upbeat.

The main idea being communicated here is that the product is healthy for the skin, and that using the product, and therefore being healthy, will also make the consumer happy. Therefore HEALTH is HAPPINESS. The main motif is the glass fruit that the model plays with. The fruit is symbolic of the vitamins that the advertisement mentions are contained the product, and also the advertisement’s main metaphor for health. Perhaps another main motif is France – symbolized by the Eiffel Tower and the accompanying song. It is unclear whether it is merely meant to clearly communicate the country of origin of the product, or maybe some of the usual stereotypes – France and Paris as romantic or highly sophisticated places.

A secondary motif is the color pink, seen as the background behind the brand logo at the very beginning, and then in some scenery afterwards. The color pink is symbolic of femininity. It does not seem to attempt to establish a metaphor like HEALTH is FEMININITY, and therefore does not present its product as an instrument of establishing identity through its use. The advertisement is feminine, and therefore the product is feminine, and therefore the very act of purchasing the product for your own personal use is feminine.

This advertisement, however, avoids many of the established stereotypical elements of cosmetics advertisements. It mostly focuses on how the product is healthy, and how using the product makes the consumer happy, presumably due to health benefits, even though we do not see or hear what the health benefits might be. The closest the advertisement comes to relaying this is through the assorted vitamin names and the shot of the model climbing the stairs, which might be a metaphor for “healthy body”, but also a simple GOOD is UP conceptual metaphor – using the product simply makes your life better.

4.2. CoverGirl Stay Luminous

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJS1MXSWHjU>)

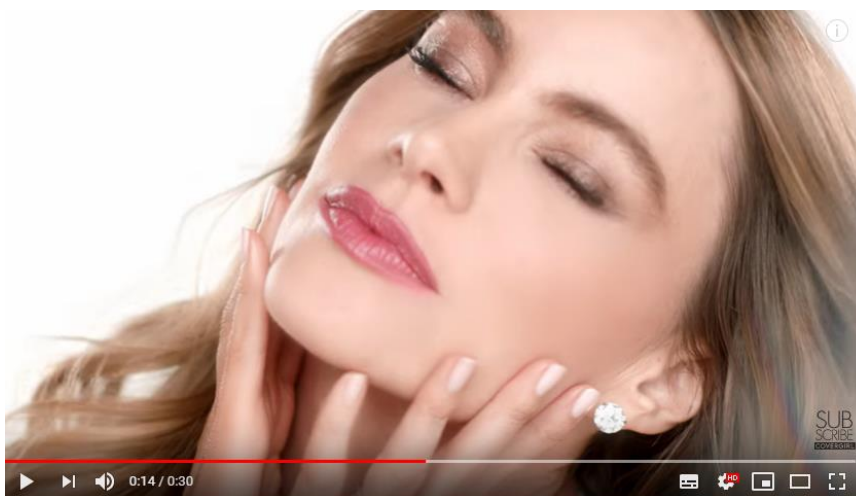
The model for this advertisement is Sofia Vergara, her name given to us in text right at the start, as she appears. The model wears a luxurious red dress. The background throughout the advertisement is composed of hundreds of red roses. There are two voices: that of the model speaking in person, and a female narrator voice-over. The model talks about love, while the voice-over provides technical information about the product. The most frequent visual motifs are the heart symbol, shown flying out of the model’s chest, or being used as part of the background to frame the centre, and the red roses, which are shown in the background, in a bouquet held by the model, and as a single dewy rose in a close-up shot as the advertisement tells us about its hydrating function. About two-thirds into the advertisement, another product, a lipstick, is presented from the same line. The model is shown applying the lipstick and then looking very happy. Apart from the repeating brand logo and the product line name, we also see the text “ALL DAY HYDRATION”, “PLUS LUMINOSITY”, and “NEW” written next to the product in several shots. The advertisement ends with the model saying “From easy, breezy, CoverGirl.”

The overlaying motif and the intended message seems to be that USING THE PRODUCT is BEING IN LOVE. The product is verbally promised to capture “the radiant glow of being in love” and this is supported by almost every other element of the visual composition – red roses, red hearts, in general, overwhelming red colour except for the occasional heart-framed white background and the product packaging. The model is either in an ecstatic mood while talking or touching her face sensually during the voice-overs, as can be seen in the screenshots 1 and 2

below. The colour white is being used as a neutral colour occasionally, but in one instance we see the model in a white dress, perhaps to signalize innocent love and therefore emphasize the emotional side of love, as there seems to be little attempt to sexualize apart from the sensual gestures of the model.



Screenshot 1, Youtube



Screenshot 2, Youtube

The only element of the advertisement that does not relate directly to love are the buzzwords shown next to the products, and the voice-over narrator as she mentions that the make-up has all day hydration and is loaded with moisture. There is a clear separation between Vergara, who is in love, and the voice-over, that is, an objective character giving facts. As was mentioned in the Theoretical background section, science and sex sell, and in this commercial, the model and the narrator represent the combination of those two elements.

It is safe to conclude that the advertisement's central conceptual metaphor, USING THE PRODUCT is BEING IN LOVE, is also its main intended selling point. It does not highlight sexuality, however. Instead, the product should "capture that glow", meaning that it is intended for women that either already are in love, or wish to be. There is no attempt to say that not using the product will be disadvantageous or that not being in love is in any way negative, therefore there is no attempt to strongly identify being in love as being required or feminine – except the motifs used are traditionally seen as feminine, but, it could just be explained as a signal of who the advertisement is aimed at. The only element that allows for stronger identification is the model's final line: "From easy, breezy, beautiful CoverGirl", telling us that CoverGirl products are intended for women who identify as relaxed or easy-going – thus emphasizing the informal instead of the formal to seem more accepting.

4.3. L'Oreal Skin Perfection

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXRBsgDnKuk>)

This advertisement loosely follows a narrative about the model's day in her life, from the moment she wakes up to when she goes out in the evening to relax. We are not given the name of the model. There are three main elements to the sequence of quick, short shots that make up most of the advertisement. One is the model being followed by the camera as she moves through her daily life through the city and her work, the other is just shots of the model's implied baby, partner, and pet dog against a white background, and the third are less lucid shots of spinning or jumping toys or shots overlaid with other shots for intentionally (not too) confusing visuals. Throughout this entire sequence, the model narrates, telling us "My life – crazy. My routine – killer. My skin – always perfect". Finally, the ending part of the advertisement adds another element – as the model narrates that "The [product's] secret is in the science", we see a couple of shots of a transparent bubbly liquid on a black background – the shiny bubbles then fade into the shine of the model's dress in another shot. The advertisement ends with the model in black and white, shaking her hair to regain colour (presumably under the effect of the product) and narrating the L'Oreal slogan "We're worth it."

The quick succession of shots, the visual tricks, the theme, the narration, and the soundtrack all multimodally convey an atmosphere of a frantic work day in the life of a young woman living

and working in a big city. This frantic lifestyle is presented as a problem that is tackled with confidence, and the key to this confidence is perfect skin. Only when we are told this is the product shown for the first time, but not in its entirety, as presented as some kind of secret solution. Therefore, as a central conceptual metaphor – THE PRODUCT is CONFIDENCE.

This advertisement offers a lot for the viewers to identify with – but packages it into a single role of a young married working mother who still has time and a desire to go out in the evening. We see here some of the rules of Benwell and Stokoe’s Commodified Femininity in action: “activity fitness is good/and we are always in action” – there is no complaining about the model’s routine, just the acceptance that it is frantic; “inactivity in the form of relaxation is encouraged” – the model can and will go out in the evening after a long day of working and tending to the needs of the members of her household; and “consistency of appearance is good” – the model’s skin always stays perfect throughout any ordeal. The final stereotypical element is the so-called science of the product mentioned, left unexplained, but still here as a guarantee of quality. All in all, this advertisement is a good example of how feminine cosmetics product advertisements are usually stereotyped, and a good example of how multimodality is used in advertising as well.

4.4. L’Oreal True Match

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWIPZKXh2R4>)

The composition of this advertisement is simple. We see the model Jennifer Lopez sitting in an empty set in only a long shirt, talking to the camera. This alternates with shots of her dancing with her voice-over continuing. Later, the talking shot is close-up as the model touches her face. At the end of the advertisement, we see a shot of the product with more voice-over, and finally the company logo and voice-over slogan. The soundtrack is slow piano music to match the model’s slow, sensual pace of talking. The voice-over by the model talks about how “you” – the product, “weren’t my first”, but “from the very first touch – I knew. I’d finally found my true match”.

Multimodal elements at work here are the narration, the soundtrack, and the empty set to create a metaphor of a lover’s confession in private. The model is actually making a confession to the advertised product, but filmed as talking to us. The model’s clothes, the modulation of her voice, and her gestures and expressions convey sensuality, as if the model is sexually interested

in the product. The entire voice-over leads to the name drop of the product: “I’d finally found my true match”, as we are shown a shot of the product. So, THE PRODUCT is ROMANTIC INTEREST.

Whereas the Sofia Vergara Covergirl ad advertises their product as a way to feel in love, this one equates the product with a romantic or sexual interest – using the product (“from the very first touch”) is literally a sexual activity, and continuing to purchase and rely on the product is not only a working, but a perfect romantic relationship for the model.

There is another important element to the advertisement – the line “The others... they tried to make me into something I’m not” both functions as a deterrent to the competition, and a way for the viewers to identify themselves with the model – no one wants to be changed by others. This essentially narrows our choice of product to this one, and along with the promise of true love for the product works as a very strong message: this is the best, the only product for you.

4.5. Maybelline No Maybes

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-D7tbdBjIx4>)

In this short and simple advertisement, we see the model in her apartment with an expression of doubt, then putting make up, and then going out into the city with confidence, and reaching the roof of a building as the company and product logo appear in the sky above her head. There is a soundtrack instrumental song that starts out somewhat flat but then becomes inspiring. The colours of the apartment the model starts out in are all white, except for the model, her red clothes, and the multi-coloured products shown lain out on a table. There is a voice-over by the model, saying “We’ve all come face to face with doubt. But today, there’s no time for maybes. Cover up nothing, and show off everything.” The important synchronization between the voice-over and the rest of the video happens at two points – “but today” coincides with the first shot of the products and the point at which the soundtrack speeds up, and the final part of the voice-over coincides with the model coming out on the roof of the building.

The contrast between white and other colours at the start symbolizes doubt and inaction before applying the product and the confidence gained afterwards. To capitalize on THE PRODUCT

is CONFIDENCE metaphor, there are shots of confidently walking through the town and reaching a literal and symbolic high point – the roof of the building. There is nothing on the roof that would fit narratively into the action, however, we are just shown the product and company logos in the sky. But still, GOOD is UP, and that is where the confidence granted by the product leads.

Everyone desires to be confident, and there is very little in the advertisement to characterize the model's character – she is not shown performing any activities besides having doubts, putting on make-up, and being confident. Only her identity as a woman is confirmed by the choice of stereotypical clothes and hairstyle. This makes her a good target for any female viewer to identify with in a short time, since her only objective is gaining confidence. The product is then offered as the solution to this objective. If you wish to be a confident woman, you have to use this product.

The final line “show off everything” adds instructions for feminine behaviour. Of course, “showing off everything” is only possible with enough confidence, so this line acts as introducing another problem to be solved with the product, and making the viewer responsible for actually buying the product so they can solve this problem – that they might not have been aware of (as discussed by Ringrow, 2016,).

4.6. Maybelline Total Temptation

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N7YUyZeBXs>)

This advertisement consists of a series of quick shots of two models either lying on pink blanket or from extreme close-ups to show them applying/having applied the mascara to their eyelashes. Between these shots, there are two shots of the product alongside the brand and product logos. There are also several appearances of the Maybelline logo. There is a voice-over, reading the text “Give in to New Temptation mascara from Maybelline New York, our most addictive volume. Creamy formula infused with coconut extract; lashes so soft, so dense, so tempting. New Temptation mascara, only from Maybelline New York.” As they are spoken, these words also appear on the screen in a large font: “addictive volume”, “creamy formula”, “coconut extract”, as well as some unspoken phrases: “so soft”, and “so dense”. There is an unobtrusive soundtrack song with sensual female vocals in the background.

There is very little focus on the mood or the expressions of the models, except in two shots where they lie on the blanket, first gripping it sensually, and then stretching happily after using the product. The most obvious elements are the close-up shots of the eyelashes and mascara being applied, the product packaging, the repeated brand logo, and the buzz-phrases as text on the screen.

There is very little expressed multimodally, except the sensuality of the song and seen in the portrait shots of the models, which is here to invoke the name of the product – Total Temptation. Instead, the main point of the advertisement seems to be to inform of the beneficial properties of the product. The buzz-phrases invoke the concepts of needing the product (“addictive”), richness (“creamy”), naturalness (“coconut”), and of the so-called science behind the product with more technical words such as “volume”, “formula”, and “extract”. These are all standard techniques of making a selling point in advertising and cosmetics advertising as seen in 2.3. and 2.3.1. Further information is given through the close-up shots of the eyelashes, and the phrases “so soft” and “so dense”.

While the underlying conceptual metaphor might be that THE PRODUCT is SENSUALITY and connects the concept of sensuality to the feminine identity somewhat, it is not what the advertisement relies on heavily to sell its product.

4.7. Max Factor All Day Flawless 3-in-1 Foundation

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2_TbrdmmT4)

The model in this advertisement is young, with clear skin, wearing tan-coloured clothes. She is shown applying the product to her face, then touching her face, and at one point her image is split into three with slightly different coloured clothes to represent the three main functions of the product – the images then merge into one. We see more shots of the model in split mirror images and then her talking to us confidently. There are only two shots of the product itself, one similar to the triple split image of the model to show its functions and one near the end during the voice-over, resting on a drawn portrait of a woman. The backgrounds in the video are mostly empty white. There is a thrilling instrumental soundtrack. Unspoken text appears on the screen: “I AM – FLAWLESS”, “TOGETHER – ALL DAY”, “81% of 98 women agree”, and in the end “MAKE YOUR GLAMOUR STATEMENT EVERY DAY”. There is a short

line spoken by the model near the end: “I am eternal. I am new 3 in 1 All Day Flawless Foundation”.

There are plenty of concepts being invoked here: perfection, multiplicity-in-one and therefore harmony, and permanence. We keep seeing three or even more images of the same thing (the model or the product) that merge into one – this is to emphasize the three different functions of the product (primer, concealer, and foundation, as we are shown in one shot) also present in its name. The concept of perfection or flawlessness also plays off the name of the product, but has a further function of informing us of the supposed quality of the product. Finally, the concept of permanence is invoked by the phrases “ALL DAY” and “I am eternal” – where the model’s character personifies the product itself instead of someone using it. This is to tell us of the long-lasting effect of the product.

However, alongside the model’s piercing, confident expression and the final message of the advertisement: “MAKE YOUR GLAMOUR STATEMENT EVERY DAY”, the concepts of perfection, harmony, and permanence further construct the meaning of female empowerment through the use of the product. As a conceptual metaphor – USING THE PRODUCT is EMPOWERMENT. Again, as in 4.5. there is a final line that introduces a kind of a situation the viewer might not have been aware up until that point, namely, that making your glamour statement is something you should be doing, and that doing it every day would be even better. This is a case of false agency “handed” by the advertisement to the viewer. Furthermore, there’s the Benwell and Stokoe’s rule that consistency of appearance is good and desired.

One last thing to be mentioned is the text that appears for 6 seconds at the beginning – “81% of 98 women agree”. This is the only attempt by the advertisement to insert scientific sounding facts into it, even though it conceptually looks like science might be the main selling point. The statistic itself is quite meaningless, but probably here to look good because of the seemingly big number.

4.8. Revlon PhotoReady Insta-Filter Foundation

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEN8s2DW6tM>)

Another compositionally simple advertisement, even though shots seem detailed. The advertisement follows a short narrative of four models in a dressing room getting ready for their photo-shoot, already dressed glamorously, applying the product, taking selfies (occasionally with the product), and generally having a lot of fun before they come out into the studio, where they keep behaving similarly while posing for photos. Occasionally they sing along to the soundtrack, an electronic party song. There is a voice-over near the end, saying “Insta-Filter Foundation with built-in blender keeps you photo-ready. Revlon. Live boldly.”

The entirety of the advertisement’s visuals are there to relay two messages – that of the glamour the models work in – there are camera flashes, lights, lens-flare, and shiny jewellery – and that of how carefree happy they are at their job. The voice-over explains the reason for their happiness: their InstaFilter Foundation keeps them photo-ready, so the models have nothing to worry about. Photo-ready can easily be understood as a synonym for “attractive”, so the main message is that using the product makes you attractive. We could not say that the advertisement goes further to also say that being attractive makes you carefree, since it does frame the models as specifically being at work, where they have to be “photo-ready” to perform well at their profession, not at being a woman or a person. However, there is no reason to believe that the ad is targeted only at models – being “photo-ready” appeals to everyone.

4.9. Revlon Super Lustrous Lipstick

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp-hRLQmAX4>)

In this advertisement we see shots of the model Gwen Stefani (introduced by a colossal GWEN text as she walks into the first shot), first walking towards us confidently in a revealing dress, then a close-up with a sensual expression, then applying the product, and finally confident and happy again afterwards. These shots alternate with shots of the product, which at one point show all the available colours of the lipstick line alongside the text “82 SHADES”. Other floating text includes “GWEN FOR REVLON” at the very start, “98% SAW HIGH-IMPACT COLOR”, and “CHOOSE LOVE” at the end. The model also provides a voice-over that says

“Choose to make a statement. Revlon Super Lustrous – the world’s most iconic lipstick with micro-fine pigments for high-impact colour. Revlon Super Lustrous Lipstick. In 82 on-trend shades. You hold the power – choose love! Revlon.”

Apart from the usual array of expressions used to show how the model interacts with the product (sensuality, happiness), the main point of the advertisement is to tell the viewer to take control and choose – the product. The model’s confident stride, the words “choose”, “make a statement”, “you hold the power” all play into this construction of the concept of empowerment through the purchase and use of the product. Therefore, OWNING THE PRODUCT is EMPOWERMENT.

The remainder of the elements are used to emphasize the supposed qualities of the product, such as “high-impact color” which it achieves due to the “micro-fine pigments”. We are also told that it is the “world’s most iconic lipstick”, making others less important.

4.10. Rimmel Stay Matte Liquid Lipstick

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07rLUZZWJQc>)

This advertisement is constructed as a short narrative during which we are shown the model and singer Rita Ora arrive at a show venue through the garage, moving through the building towards the backstage, applying the product in the backstage, and having fun before the show, all the while accompanied by various crew members. Afterwards, she confidently walks off to the stage to sing. There is a thrilling instrumental soundtrack throughout the advertisement, and a long voice-over by Rita Ora, as follows:

“When I was little, I used to sit on my mom’s bed, and watch her put on her lipstick. And I thought – I want to look like that one day. A bold lip for me is everything. It transforms me. It makes me feel more confident... and it makes me feel like – me. When you find your color, and it suits you, it almost becomes part of your personality. You become invincible. It’s the power of the lip. Stay Matte Liquid Lip Color. Boldness that stays on. From Rimmel London”.

There is also floating text appearing next to the model performing actions contextual to the floating text, such as “BOLD MATTE LIPS”, when the model applies product, “LONG-LASTING” as she bites her lip, or “KISS-PROOF” when she kisses the camera lens. All of these merely emphasize the supposed qualities of the product, mainly its longevity.

The main concepts at work here would be “confidence” and “transformation”. The model arrives at the building in casual clothes, with a hood over her head and sunshades over her eyes, unrecognizable. As the advertisement progresses, she removes the hood and shades, dons a dress, and puts on make-up – she transforms into another person who is now ready to have fun and work. The more transformed she is, the more confidence she has. This is made quite clear by the voice-over, which adds another dimension: for Rita Ora to feel like herself, she has to transform into herself first, using lipstick – just like her mother used to. The confidence gained by the transformation also gives her power.

Of all the advertisements so far, this one hits the most points on the Benwell and Stokoe checklist:

- 3) Activity is good, and we are always busy
- 7) Bare face is bad
- 8) Transformation, newness and change are good
- 9) Consistency of appearance is good

What this means altogether is that the message of the advertisement is that a woman needs to be ready for the activities in her life (both work and play), and she becomes ready by putting on make-up. There is no question whether make-up is required, only the question of which colour lipstick suits a person and “transforms” them into themselves. So, the product here is an instrument of identification, without it, there is no identity, except the one we hide from the world at large, when not working or relaxing, which is not the real us. From a feminist theory point of view, this might be the most problematic advertisement of the ten due to how it approaches its main selling point – THE PRODUCT is ME, or alternatively THE PRODUCT is MY IDENTITY. There is no mistake that this is the underlying metaphor, since most of the elements (apart from the floating texts) synergize to make it so – the progression of the video, the soundtrack, and, of course, the voice-over.

5. Discussion

5.1. Theme analysis

Overall, all the advertisements exhibit a number of themes, that serve as anchors that bring all the elements of a commercial together. These themes are presented in the Table 1 below.

Advertisement	Main theme
Loreal True Match https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWIPZKXh2R4	Love
Covergirl Stay Luminous https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJS1MXSWHjU	Love
Maybelline Total Temptation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N7YUyZeBXs	Sensuality
Maybelline No Maybes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-D7tbdBjlx4	Confidence/empowerment
Revlon Super Lustrous https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp-hRLQmAX4	Empowerment/love
Max Factor All day Flawless 3 in 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2_TbrdmmT4	Confidence
Bourjois Healthy Mix https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcXrEMzH_Fs	Health/happiness
Rimmel Stay Matte https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07rLUZZWJQc	Confidence
Revlon PhotoReady Insta Filter https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEN8s2DW6tM	Confidence/happiness
Loreal Skin Perfection https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXRBsgDnKuk	Lifestyle

Table 1 Selected advertisements and their main themes

The theme represented the most in the listed advertisements is confidence. The pattern that can be found in all confidence themed ads is that a product helps build confidence and positively influences one's self-esteem. In Maybelline No Maybes ad, the lead character, Gigi Hadid connects with the audience by stating that "we've all come face to face with doubt" while sitting

on a couch in the comfort of her home. After she put the make up on, the music jumps in the background and she steps outside of the apartment to face the busy city with confidence and a smile. In this example, it is clear that the product, the Maybelline lipstick in this case, is what one needs to gain confidence and face the outside world. In other words, confidence can be bought and it even fits in our purses. Rimmel Stay Matte advertisement takes it even further by explicitly elaborating on how a lipstick increases confidence and empowers people. Rita Ora, the celebrity featured in the Rimmel commercial, opens up to the audience saying: “A bold lip for me is everything. It transforms me. It makes me feel more confident and it makes me feel more like me. When you find your colour and it suits you, it almost becomes part of your personality. You become invincible.” Here, the confidence theme is taken to another level. That is, not only can you buy it and put it on, but it already is a part of you without which you are vulnerable and not completely yourself. Max Factor All Day Flawless 3 in 1 advertisement on the other hand contains no elaborate narration or explanation. It is rather a collection of shots featuring a model giving confident glares while, presumably, wearing the foundation in question. The only statement the model makes is: “I am eternal”, which could be interpreted as confidence never going out of style. A similar scenario can be found in Revlon PhotoReady Insta-Filter commercial depicting a group of models getting ready for a photo shoot by themselves. In the beginning they are having fun applying the advertised foundation and during the shooting session they pose and sing along to the upbeat background song giving the idea that the product they’ve used helped them build confidence and the energy that comes with self-assurance.

Another major theme in this sample of commercials is love. For instance, in the Revlon Super Lustrous commercial, as a form of persuasion, Gwen Stefani addresses the viewers saying that they hold the power and encourages them to choose love, which, according to this commercial, comes in “82 on-trend shades”. While the Gwen Stefani commercial stresses love as its main theme in a more subtle way by having the main character wearing a red dress and a matching lipstick shade, the Covergirl Stay Luminous Foundation takes the love theme to a whole other level using a lot of love themed elements and symbols. In addition, the background song lyrics include the word love which is repeated many times. The commercial clearly compares wearing the foundation in question to being in love. On the other hand, the Loreal True Match commercial featuring Jennifer Lopez does not include red colour, hearts or roses, but is based on a personification of the advertised foundation. Lopez confesses to the product the same way

one would use while talking to a lover or a partner creating a sense of intimacy, trust and ultimately, love.

The main theme of the Maybelline Total Temptation Mascara commercial is sensuality. Though the product's name justifies the theme itself, in the ad there are close up shots of the models' eyes and eyelashes as the narrator lists the characteristics of the product using adjectives one would choose to describe something being sensual or tempting. Also, soft music playing in the background sets the mood for the sensuality themed commercial.

Another theme which can be found in the sample of cosmetics commercials is lifestyle. In the Loreal Skin Perfection commercial, celebrity model Karlie Kloss reveals to the viewers how her skin always looks perfect despite her busy lifestyle. In the ad, we find out that she is a mother, a dog owner, has frequent photo shoots, travels a lot, posts things on social media, works out and parties. Still, her skin remains flawless due to the advertised product, which is a bit mysterious since the ad doesn't quite state what the product exactly is.

Last but not least, the theme of the Bourjois Healthy Mix foundation commercial is health. Also, the commercial links health to happiness. The foundation is advertised as containing vitamins and does not explain much, but based on the name of the product, it is supposed to be healthy for one's skin. Also, the model, who seems really excited and happy about the product, holds artificial fruit, which gives an idea that the vitamins in the product come from a natural source, that is, real fruit.

5.2. Multimodality

From our random sample of advertisements, it is clear that the level of multimodality used to create meaning varies to an extent. As expected, all the advertisements have a visual and an auditory element, both of which can be further divided into floating text, model shots, product shots, etc. for visuals, and into direct address, voice-over, and soundtrack for the auditory element. Furthermore, these can then be analysed for properties such as content (of the text), gestures and facial expressions, the tone of the voice, the beat of the music, etc.

The advertisements that employ multimodality to a larger extent are 4.1., 4.2., 4.3., 4.4., 4.5., 4.7., 4.8., and 4.10. Only the examples 4.6. and 4.9. are thus metaphorically simpler, but for different reasons. The example 4.6. focuses more on the text and narration providing information directly, whereas the composition of 4.9. loses focus as it chooses to convey different information with different elements.

In all the examples that employ multimodality, the intention is to convey the selling point of the product, coded into a conceptual metaphor. This metaphor usually has the product or any kind of interaction with the product as source domain, and some desired attribute, concept, or quality to be gained by the potential customer as the target domain. For example, THE PRODUCT is CONFIDENCE, or, USING THE PRODUCT is BEING IN LOVE. Only the example 4.1. codes its message a bit differently, saying that the product is healthy, which is not a metaphor, but then saying that HEALTH is HAPPINESS. This is just an extra step in an otherwise identical process of meaning construction. The extra step does make the message subtler, however, and therefore more acceptable to the general public.

5.3. Advertising

These multimodally constructed metaphors are, of course, in the employ of advertising. They are used to equate the product or using the product to some desired property of being, which should inspire viewers to purchase the product, expecting, consciously or sub-consciously, the same result. The elements that these metaphors are constructed out of are the same elements mentioned in sections 2.3. and 2.3.1 as the basic elements of advertising – by connecting otherwise conceptually unrelated elements (into a metaphor), they create a need, a responsibility, or an identity and at the same time provide the answer for that need, or a way to achieve the responsibility or identity. For example, in 4.7., the viewer is told to “make your glamour statement every day”. How does one do that? They need all the confidence and power that the product metaphorically provides while also physically providing foundation. Neither the need to make everyday glamour statements nor the supposed fact that the product grants confidence exist outside this advertisement until the advertisement creates them and tells us that that is how it has always been.

From the analyses, it is clear that there are two common, maybe even somewhat default, source domains for the aforementioned metaphors. The advertisements attempt to conceptualize their products as sources of either sensuality (being central in 4.2., 4.4., 4.6., and 4.9.) or confidence (4.3., 4.5., 4.7., 4.10.), sometimes with overlap (in 4.9.). The third source domain which appears only once in our sample is health (in 4.1.). What this indicates is at what kind of stereotypical customer the advertisements are targeted – the average woman in the world of the advertisements craves romantic or sexual partnership, requires a lot of confidence to get through her day, and is probably concerned about her health. We conflate love with sensuality here seeing that they are mostly different aspects of the same concept. Furthermore, the everyday routine that requires so much confidence is supposed to be frantic or at least demanding enough that dealing with it takes outside assistance, an outside source of confidence.

However, the advertisements 4.7. and 4.9. do not directly use sensuality or confidence as their source domains. We have mentioned that the conceptual metaphor that they construct is actually PRODUCT is EMPOWERMENT. What they empower the customer to do is to feel love (4.9.) or confidence (4.7.) whenever they so desire. This just seems as an extra step in what we already established as the default mapping, but it does construct meaning differently than without the extra step – instead of presenting the product as the (required) solution to a problem, it conceptualizes it as a means of finding the solution yourself. Of course, the customer still has to buy the product first, but will seemingly not do so a passive participant – the product is not literally what the customer needs, it is what they will use to get to what they need, actively, as their own choice.

The other somewhat common element, appearing in five out of ten advertisements, are scientifically-sounding facts about the product being shown on the screen or spoken aloud – or even just the implication of science being involved in the creation of the product. Two of the advertisements, namely 4.3. and 4.7. only use very simple messages and visuals to imply the scientific element. This tells us two things – that the customers are aware that science is considered to be a stereotypical way of proving that something works, and that science is too confusing for the average person, so there is really no need to explain it any further than the fact that “science was involved in the making and testing of the product”. Even when the science behind the product is explained, it usually only consists of various buzzwords (volume, extract, formula) or meaningless statistics (such as in 4.7.).

We also notice the identities of the models in the advertisements often play an important, but less obvious part in creating the message. It becomes somewhat more obvious in the advertisements that make sure that the viewers are aware of the models' identities by announcing them in voice-over or putting their names on the screen. As mentioned in 2.3.1., celebrity endorsement is seen as favourable because celebrities are seen as more trustworthy than average people.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to provide a critical analysis of the commercials and to see if multimodal conceptual metaphor may be seen as a major construction element of the advertisements. To fully appreciate how the medium builds its message multimodally, every single auditory or visual element that carries any meaning was taken into account and analysed for how it interacts with the other elements of both kinds. To have something to compare our results to, we used theoretical background on advertising in general, alongside a feminist theory perspective.

The results showed that all of the advertisements were constructed using a basic multimodal conceptual metaphor that equates a concept to another concept. This metaphor always works as the selling point of the product, and to this end conceptualizes the product as a source of sensuality, confidence, or health – something desired by the viewers. Through this, they also construct an identity that the customers should assume. The elements of this identity are the need for the product/concept presented as product, and the various audio-visual cues – the choice of stereotypical themes (which correspond to the product/concept), colours, music, and the situations that the models find themselves in. Another common element of the advertisements were found to be the scientific motifs, not seen in the majority of our sample, but always used as a way to assure of quality or efficiency of the product.

In the end, the conceptual and multimodal metaphor approach to analysing how cosmetics advertisements construct their meaning proved to be fruitful, as the metaphors that could be found in the advertisements and the way they are treated correspond directly to how the advertising theory explains advertising usually functions, especially cosmetics advertising.

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